

Parliamentary Report

Item	Summary
<p><u>Written Question on psychological therapies for deaf individuals</u></p>	<p>Luciana Berger MP (Lab, Liverpool Wavertree) has asked the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to ensure that psychological therapies are available to deaf people.</p> <p>In response, the Minister of State for the Department of Health, Alistair Burt MP (Con, North East Bedfordshire) said that:</p> <p><i>“It is the responsibility of local providers and commissioners to make the reasonable adjustments required by the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that disabled people are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled people.”</i></p> <p>He continued, saying that:</p> <p><i>“In order to reduce unacceptable variation in the provision of accessible information and communication support to disabled people, including adult sign readers, NHS England published a statutory accessible information standard. The standard sets out that all organisations providing NHS services must take steps to ensure that people receive information that they can access and understand, and receive communication support if they need it. Organisations must comply in full with the standard by 31 July 2016. Many local authorities provide interpreters within talking therapy settings.”</i></p> <p>Finally he noted that:</p> <p><i>“There is on-going activity by NHS England and the Department to encourage access to Improving Access to Psychological Therapy (IAPT) services by the under-represented groups. Over the last spending review we invested over £400 million into the IAPT programme to ensure access to talking therapies for those who need them. The Prime Minister recently announced £1 billion to start a revolution in mental health. NHS England’s Mental Health Taskforce reported in February 2016, setting out transformative plans using that additional funding, including for IAPT.</i></p> <p><i>“Additional funding will enable NHS England to put in place a five year plan to improve IAPT services across the country, increasing access to evidence-based psychological therapies to reach 25% of need, and helping 600,000 more people to access care each year by 2020 with a focus on people living with long-term physical health conditions.”</i></p>

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Disability

Click on link for source

Item	Summary
<p><u>DWP announces changes to the assessment for Personal Independence Payments</u></p>	<p>The Department for Work and Pensions has responded to its public consultation on the use aids and appliances in the assessment for Personal Independence Payments (PIP). The Government has announced that it will reduce the weighting given to the use of appliances for some daily activities such as washing and using the toilet – this will reduce the number of people eligible for both the standard and enhanced rate of the Daily Living Component.</p> <p>In making this decision the Government has said that ‘using an aid or appliance for these two activities less reliably identifies extra costs associated with having a disability’, which is why it has reduced the points allocated to these people. The Government has said that ‘the government continues to spend £50 billion a year on benefits to help people with disabilities or health conditions, and additional support is available to people who need it most’.</p> <p><u>In response</u> the Shadow Minister for Disabled, Debbie Abrahams MP (Lab, Oldham East and Saddleworth), has said that the move will mean that 600,000 people will lose an average of £2,000.</p>
<p><u>Liberal Democrat Spring Conference passes motion to introduce ‘all-disabled shortlists’ to increase the participation of disabled people in politics</u></p>	<p>The Liberal Democrats have passed a motion at their spring conference aimed at increasing the participation of under-represented groups of society in politics, including the use of all-disabled shortlists for the selection of candidates.</p> <p>The motion allows the party to select candidates via all women shortlists and all disabled shortlists and to reserve spaces on shortlists in winnable seats for BAME and LGTB+ members.</p> <p>The Liberal Democrat President, Sal Brinton, has been quoted in a piece on the <u>BBC website</u>. This article states:</p> <p><i>“Rejecting the charge that it was tokenistic, she said: “We’ve tried support and mentoring for candidates from these under-represented groups and it’s just not working.” Part of the problem, she said, was that people - whether members or the electorate - often “can’t see beyond the wheelchair or the British Sign Language interpreter”. “Their view of an MP is not somebody in a wheelchair and that is really, really frustrating,”</i></p>

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	<p><i>she added. It was vital therefore to persuade the public that disabled parliamentarians "have done a very good job", she said. The party will try the format in the run up to the 2020 general election - and would try to encourage take-up by proposing spaces on the shortlists of "winnable seats".</i></p>
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Transport

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Item	Summary
<p><u>Oral question on disability access to rail stations</u></p>	<p>During an oral question on the refurbishment of train stations Jake Berry MP (Con, Kingston and Surbiton) asked the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport, Claire Perry MP (Con, Devizes) to consider prioritising disability access when refurbishing train stations.</p> <p>In response Claire Perry said that the Government have set up the £400 million Access for All scheme, which 'has been wisely and well spent'. She added that the Government is 'always happy to look at additional station improvements'.</p> <p>Andy McDonald (Lab, Middlesbrough) also called for disability access to be made a priority during stations refurbishments, asking the Government to 'ensure that the needs of passengers are central to the refurbishment or renovation of stations without any access provisions or stations that need upgrading', He asked 'how can that be achieved, given the 40% cut to Access for All funding?'</p> <p>In response Claire Perry questioned the premise of the question and said that the Government '<i>are spending more on the railways—£38 billion—than has been spent at any time since the Victorian era. She added that 'all the train fleet will be disability compliant in the next few years. It is important, but we have a limited amount of money to spend on upgrading the railways, which were woefully neglected under his Government'.</i></p>

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Health and Social Care

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Item	Summary
<u>Written question on the potential revenue for social care being raised through the council tax precept</u>	<p>Ivan Lewis MP (Lab, Bury South) has asked the Department for Communities and Local Government what estimate it has made of the potential maximum overall annual amount which could be raised if each local authority imposed the maximum social care levy.</p> <p>In response the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State said that the Department estimates that if all local authorities who deliver social care were to choose to use a two per cent precept this would total £393 million in 2016-17. If similar flexibilities were used in full in subsequent years, this would rise to around £1.8 billion in 2019-20. Local authorities will be required to provide confirmation that the additional revenue has been used for Adult Social Care in addition to confirming the amounts of expenditure in statistical returns. He added that in addition, the Secretary of State will take account of local authorities' actions when setting referendum principles in future years.</p>
<u>Independent Age publishes poll showing support for cross party action to fix health and social care</u>	<p>The charity Independent Age have published a poll which shows that an overwhelming majority of British adults (85%) are concerned about the future of the NHS and 91% agree that political parties should work together to ensure that we can rely on the health and care services we need as we get older.</p> <p>Independent Age have used the poll to claim that the public supports the proposal for an independent commission on the future of health and social. They state that:</p> <p><i>“The proposal for an independent commission has the backing of MPs from across the political divide, as well as former Conservative and Labour Health Secretaries Stephen Dorrell and Alan Milburn, and former Liberal Democrat Care Minister Norman Lamb MP. In January, forty organisations – including Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie, British Red Cross and Independent Age – signed an open letter urging the Prime Minister to make the commission a reality.”</i></p> <p>Action on Hearing Loss was also a signatory to the open letter.</p>